

Message Text

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ACTION IO-14

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 DEAE-00 CIAE-00
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ICA-11 NSC-05 OES-07 OMB-01 SS-15 HEW-04 DODE-00
L-03 AID-05 AGRE-00 /103 W
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R 131250Z APR 78
FM USMISSION GENEVA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8315
INFO AMEMBASSY KABUL
AMEMBASSY PARIS

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PARIS FOR DEA

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: SNAR, UN, AF
SUBJECT: TRIP REPORT ON AFGHANISTAN

MR. MICHAEL DEMETRE, UNFDAC PROJECT DEVELOPMENT OFFICER,
PREPARED THE INFORMAL REPORT BELOW UPON RETURNING FROM
HIS TRIP LAST MONTH TO AFGHANISTAN. HE SUBMITTED IT TO
UNFDAC EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REXED, WHO FORWARDED COPIES TO
THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERNATIONAL NARCOTICS CONTROL
BOARD AND THE DIRECTOR OF THE DIVISION OF NARCOTIC DRUGS.

BEGIN TEXT - "DURING MY LAST UNFDAC MISSION TO AFGHANISTAN
I MADE SEVERAL FORAYS INTO THE COUNTRYSIDE TO VISIT
POTENTIAL PROJECT SITES. A SIDETRIPO TO JALALABAD WAS
PARTICULARLY INFORMATIVE IN PROVIDING EVIDENCE OF THE
EXPANDED EXTENT OF POPPY PRODUCTION IN THE AREA AND OF
THE LACK OF ENFORCEMENT IN THE JALALABAD, KANDOMAK AND
SERAK AREAS.

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DURING A FIELD TRIP, VIA JEEP, I TRACED THE OLD "BRITISH
RETREAT" ROAD WHICH LEADS FROM JALALABAD BACK TO KABUL
THROUGH SOME RATHER PRIMITIVE ROADS. GENERALLY, MOST
OF THE ROADS WERE IN SUCH DISREPAIR THAT THEY HARDLY
DESERVE THE NAME OF ROADS. APPROXIMATELY ONE THIRD OF THE
NINE-HOUR TRIP WAS SPENT CROSSING OLD RIVERWASHES.

THE REMOTE UPPER REACHES OF THE VALLEY ARE STREWN WITH GLACIAL TILL, LARGE BOULDERS AND A CONTINUOUS SPRINKLING OF FIST-SIZED ROCKS. FROM THESE UPPER REACHES TO THE MORE ACCESSIBLE LOWER REACHES, ONE COMMON DEMONINATOR IS EVIDENT: OPIUM POPPIES FLOURISH WITHOUT RISK OF DETECTION OR FEAR OF INTERDICTION.

IN ONE VALLEY POPPIES ABOUNDED "AS FAR AS THE EYE COULD SEE". I WOULD ESTIMATE I SAW IN THIS ONE LOCALE APPROXIMATELY ONE THOUSAND ACRES OF WELL-CULTIVATED POPPIES. A PERSON WHO HAD WALKED THIS AREA LAST YEAR INFORMED ME THAT THE AREA OF POPPY CULTIVATION HAS "MORE THAN DOUBLED". OTHER PERSONS TOLD ME THAT THE YIELDS OF OPIUM GUM HAVE INCREASED SUBSTANTIALY DUE TO THE APPLICATION OF IMPROVED TECHNOLOGY AND MORE INTENSIVE CULTIVATION TECHNIQUES.

FOR EXAMPLE, ONE POPPY FARMER INFORMED ME THAT THIS YEAR'S OPIUM YIELDS WILL APPROACH ALMOST 2-2 1/2 MONS' PER JERIB OR ABOUT 70 KG/HA, " FAR MORE THAN HIS YIELD LAST YEAR.

FURTHERMORE, TECHNIQUES OF CULTIVATION THIS YEAR SEEM TO HAVE CHANGED TO OVERCOME TRADITIONAL CONSTRAINTS, E.G., LAST YEAR OBSERVERS NOTED THE DIFFICULTY IN ESTIMATING ACREAGE OF POPPY SINCE POPPIES WERE GENERALLY INTER-CROPPED WITH WHEAT. TRADITIONALLY, AT THIS TIME IN THE SEASON, WHEAT IS THE ONLY CROP WHICH IS GROWN. THIS YEAR LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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IT WAS DIFFICULT TO FIND ANY WHEAT* ONLY SMALL ROWS OF EARLY MUSTARD, GROWN TO PROTECT THE SMALL POPPY SEEDLINGS, WERE EVIDENT ALONGSIDE WELL-MANICURED POPPY ROWS. COMMERCIAL FERTILIZER, STORED AT FIELD'S EDGE, IS USED ABUNDANTLY & CONTRIBUTES TO THE HIGH RISE IN YIELDS.

NEW METHODS OF CULTIVATION HAVE BEEN DEVELOPED TO OVERCOME THE LABOUR CONSTRAINTS SO COMMON DURING THE POPPY-LANCING PERIOD: E.G., BY PLANTING NURSERY ROWS IN OCTOBER, NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER ONE CAN STAGGER THE MATURITY RATE OF THE FIELDS SO THAT LANCING CAN TAKE PLACE OVER AN EXTENDED PERIOD, THEREBY REDUCING LABOUR COSTS AS WELL AS DISTRIBUTING LABOUR DEMAND OVER THE EXTENDED SEASON. THIS METHOD ALSO DIMINISHES RISK OF LATE FROST DAMAGE. THIS ALMOST COMMITS THE FARMERS TO THE EXCLUSIVE CULTURE OF OPIUM GUM, FOR AS THE POPPY SEASON EXTENDS INTO OTHER TRADITIONAL CROP PLANTING SEASONS, FEWER SECOND CROP ALTERNATIVES REMAIN.

' NOTE: ONE MON IN HELMAND EQUALS 10 LBS, WHILE THE MON IN JALALABAD EQUALS 16 LBS, 2 JERIBS 1 ACRE OR 5 JERIBS/HECTARE.

" THIS FIGURE REPRESENTS FARM-GATE PRODUCTION, POSSIBLY INCLUDING 35 PERCENT MOISTURE. THESE NEW METHODS WILL SERIOUSLY DIMINISH THE SUPPLY OF FOODSTUFFS IN THE LOCAL MARKETS: REDUCED SUPPLIES FORCE MARKET PRICES UPWARD, SUBSISTENCE LEVELS ARE DIMINISHED AND MALNUTRITION INCREASES, CREATING SOCIAL AND OTHER DOMESTIC PROBLEMS.

HISTORICALLY, THE GOA MEETS LOCAL FOOD SHORTAGES BY APPEALING TO INTERNATIONAL DONORS, SUCH AS THE UN WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME (WFP).

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LAST YEAR ALONE THE WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME CONTRIBUTED (1977 COMMITMENTS) 41,879 METRIC TONS OF WHEAT TO AFGHANISTAN, OF WHICH 11,734 TONS WERE ALLOCATED TO ONE PROJECT DESIGNATED AS A MULTI-PURPOSE DEVELOPMENT PROJECT, PROBABLY HOUSING, BUILDINGS OR PUBLIC AMENITIES. THIS INVOLVED A DIRECT COST TO THE INTERNATIONAL DONORS (AND INDIRECTLY TO THE GOVERNMENT OF AFGHANISTAN) OF UPWARDS OF 2.7 MILLION DOLLARS. IF THE WORLD COMMUNITY IS TO PROVIDE AFGHANISTAN THE WHEAT NORMALLY SUPPLIED BY ITS OWN FARMERS, WHO HAVE NOW SHIFTED TO POPPIES, THE PRICE COULD BE ASTRONOMICAL.

THE GOA HAS ARGUED THAT AREAS AROUND THE PROVINCIAL CAPITAL OF JALALABAD WERE ADMINISTRATIVELY UNCONTROLLABLE.

MOREOVER, ITS ARGUMENT AGAINST IMMEDIATE INTERDICTION WAS BASED ON THE CLAIM THAT THE POPPY GROWERS WERE SMALL FARMERS, SUPPORTED BY MEAGRE PLOTS AT SUBSISTENCE LEVEL INCOMES.

SOME VALIDITY EXISTS TO THE FIRST ARGUMENT, VIZ. THAT THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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GOA DOES NOT HAVE SUFFICIENT POLITICAL MUSCLE TO ADMINISTER A FAIR AND EQUITABLE ANTI-POPPY CAMPAIGN. IT WAS IN THIS LIGHT THAT UNFDAC ASSISTED THE PROVINCIAL POLICE BY EQUIPPING AN OFFICE BUILDING IN "DOWN-TOWN" JALALABAD TO ASSIST ANTI-SMUGGLING UNITS. RECENTLY, SEVERAL FIELDS OF OPIUM POPPY WERE OBSERVED WITHIN 600 METRES OF PROVINCIAL POLICE HEADQUARTERS*

CONCERNING THE LATTER ARGUMENT, THE CONTINUOUS PARCELS WHICH I OBSERVED, IRRIGATED IN DISTRICTS OF SEVERAL 100 ACRES EACH, DO NOT CONSTITUTE "SMALL FARMERS" BY ANY STRETCH OF THE IMAGINATION, NOR DOES THE LEVEL OF TECHNOLOGY INDICATE THAT THE OWNERS OF THESE AREAS CONSTITUTE THE "NEGLECTED RURAL POOR"." END TEXT.

COMMENT. MISSION WOULD APPRECIATE AMEMB KABUL'S EVALUATION OF THE EXTENT TO WHICH CONDITIONS DESCRIBED IN THE TRIP REPORT EXIST. END COMMENT. VANDEN HEUVEL

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